

## PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to conform to the Corporation's eGrants System)		
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 06/09/11	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11ND129951	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 06/09/11	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 10NDHDC002
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>		
LEGAL NAME: Share Our Strength Operation Frontline DUNS NUMBER: 621061456	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Leigh Ann Edwards TELEPHONE NUMBER: (704) 544-1723 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: laedwards@strength.org	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 1730 M Street NW Suite 700 Washington DC 20036 - 4553 County: District of Columbia		
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 521367538	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. National Non Profit 7b. National Non-Profit (Multi-State)	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION        B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION    D. OTHER (specify below):	9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>	
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps National	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Share Our Strength	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Auburn, ME Boston, MA Dallas, TX	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/01/11    END DATE: 09/01/12	14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="DC 001"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="DC 001"/>	
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="2"/>	16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372	
a. FEDERAL                      \$ 272,010.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
b. APPLICANT                      \$ 324,184.00		
c. STATE                              \$ 0.00		
d. LOCAL                              \$ 0.00		
e. OTHER                              \$ 0.00		
f. PROGRAM INCOME              \$ 0.00		
g. TOTAL                              \$ 596,194.00		
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.		
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Hayley Beers	b. TITLE: Nat. Program Coord.	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (202) 478-6534
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 07/01/11

## Narratives

### Executive Summary

Share Our Strength is the leading national organization working to make sure no kid in America grows up hungry. By weaving together a net of community groups, activists, and food programs, Share Our Strength catches children at risk of hunger and ensures they have nutritious food where they live, learn, and play. Cooking Matters is Share Our Strength's groundbreaking nutrition-education program that helps low-income families help themselves by teaching them how to prepare healthy, low-cost meals.

### Rationale and Approach

#### 1. Rationale and Approach

##### a) Compelling Community Need:

The prevalence of food insecurity and obesity in the United States creates a compelling need for education that teaches low-income families know how to get the most nutrition out of their limited budgets. According to reports published in Fall 2009 by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approximately 50 million Americans, including nearly 1 in 4 children, live in food insecure households: households that are challenged with providing enough food for all members. Food insecurity is substantially higher among households with incomes near or below the federal poverty line, those households headed by single women with children, and Black and Hispanic households. Approximately, 64% of Americans are overweight or 31% are obese. Hunger and obesity are linked as women in food insufficient households are more likely to be overweight than women in food sufficient households.

With these elevated rates of hunger and obesity, there is considerable need for nutrition education among low-income families. These families are less likely than those with higher incomes to have a healthy diet, to know about the links of diet and health, and to have the resources to properly feed themselves and their families. This has a serious, significant impact on their health and the health of

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their children.

A recent study of rural families performed by Cornell University confirmed that households are more likely to be food secure when parents know how to prepare meals, stretch their groceries, manage bills, and make a budget. Many other studies show that inadequate food and nutrition has long-term and devastating effects on health and achievement, particularly among children. In addition, the link between obesity and hunger is becoming increasingly apparent.

The deep impact of proper nutrition dictates that nutrition education is an essential component of any long-term strategy to end hunger and obesity. Even given the constraints of a limited income, low-income parents are in a much better position to insure a healthy start for their children if they:

- Understand the importance of good nutrition for their children,
- Know what kinds of foods their children need to grow and be healthy, and
- Have the cooking skills to provide food that is healthy, appealing, and low-cost.

Many community-based nonprofit organizations that work with low-income people understand the critical role that nutrition education can play in reducing hunger and poverty and have strong interest in providing nutrition education services. For over fifteen years, Operation Frontline has provided a high quality, turn-key nutrition education program to many community-based groups eager to provide this training to their clients. Our local programs often need to turn groups away or schedule classes less often than host agencies would like due to lack of staff time and resources.

The Operation Frontline AmeriCorps\*National Direct project will meet the need for nutrition education by expanding Operation Frontline programming within low-income communities at risk of hunger and poor nutrition in 16 states and the District of Columbia. The obesity rates, poverty rates, and food

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insecurity rates for each of the targeted locations are as follows:

Boston, Massachusetts

Obesity Rate for Massachusetts: 21.3%

Individuals below poverty level: 9.9%

Families below poverty level: 7.3%

Household food insecurity rate for Massachusetts: 8.3%

Chicago, Illinois

Obesity Rate for Illinois: 24.9%

Individuals below poverty level: 11.9%

Families below poverty level: 8.8%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Illinois: 11.1%

Dallas, Texas

Obesity Rate for Texas: 28.1%

Individuals below poverty level: 16.3%

Families below poverty level: 12.8%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Texas: 16.3%

Denver, Colorado

Obesity Rate for Colorado: 18.7%

Individuals below poverty level: 12.0%

Families below poverty level: 8.4%

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Household Food Insecurity Rate for Colorado: 11.6%

Detroit, Michigan

Obesity Rate for Michigan: 27.7%

Individuals below poverty level: 14.0%

Families below poverty level: 10.1%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Michigan: 12.0%

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Obesity Rate for Florida: 23.6%

Individuals below poverty level: 12.1%

Families below poverty level: 8.6%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Florida: 12.2%

Fort Worth, Texas

Obesity Rate for Texas: 28.1%

Individuals below poverty level: 16.3%

Families below poverty level: 12.8%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Texas: 16.3%

Hartford, Connecticut

Obesity Rate for Connecticut: 21.2%

Individuals below poverty level: 7.9%

Families below poverty level: 5.7%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Connecticut: 11.0%

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Houston, Texas

Obesity Rate for Texas: 28.1%

Individuals below poverty level: 16.3%

Families below poverty level: 12.8%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Texas: 16.3%

Ithaca, New York

Obesity Rate for New York: 25.0%

Individuals below poverty level: 13.7 %

Families below poverty level: 10.3%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for New York: 11.3%

Kingston, New York

Obesity Rate for New York: 25.0%

Individuals below poverty level: 13.7 %

Families below poverty level: 10.3 %

Household Food Insecurity Rate for New York: 11.3%

Los Angeles, California

Obesity Rate for California: 22.6%

Individuals below poverty level: 12.4%

Families below poverty level: 9.3%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for California: 12.0%

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Manchester, New Hampshire

Obesity Rate for New Hampshire: 24.4%

Individuals below poverty level: 7.1%

Families below poverty level: 4.6%

Household Food Insecurity rate for New Hampshire: 8.5%

New York City, New York

Obesity Rate for New York: 25.0%

Individuals below poverty level: 13.7%

Families below poverty level: 10.3%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for New York: 11.3%

Omaha, Nebraska

Obesity Rate for Nebraska: 26.0%

Individuals below poverty level: 11.2%

Families below poverty level: 8.2%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Nebraska: 10.4%

Pennsauken, New Jersey

Obesity Rate for New Jersey: 23.5%

Individuals below poverty level: 8.6%

Families below poverty level: 6.3%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for New Jersey: 10.3%

Portland, Oregon

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Obesity Rate for Oregon: 25.5%

Individuals below poverty level: 12.9%

Families below poverty level: 8.9%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Oregon: 13.1%

Raleigh, North Carolina

Obesity Rate for North Carolina: 28.0%

Individuals below poverty level: 14.3%

Families below poverty level: 10.6%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for North Carolina: 13.7%

Seattle, Washington

Obesity Rate for Washington: 25.3%

Individuals below poverty level: 11.4%

Families below poverty level: 7.8%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Washington: 11.1%

St. Louis, Missouri

Obesity Rate for Missouri: 27.5%

Individuals below poverty level: 13.0%

Families below poverty level: 9.5%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Missouri: 14.0%

St. Paul, Minnesota

Obesity Rate for Minnesota: 25.6%



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Individuals below poverty level: 9.5%

Families below poverty level: 6.5%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Minnesota: 10.3%

Washington, DC

Obesity Rate for Washington, DC: 21.8%

Individuals below poverty level: 16.4%

Families below poverty level: 13.0%

Household Food Insecurity Rate for Washington, DC: 12.4%

\*All Poverty Rate data is from the U.S. Census Bureau: Individuals and Families Below Poverty Level- Number and Rate by State (2007)

\*All Obesity Rate data is from the American Obesity Association and is for adults during the year 2007

\*All Food Insecurity Data (with or without hunger) is from the USDA ERS.

### b). Description of Activities and Member Roles

For the 2010-2011 program year, Operation Frontline requests 29 full-time AmeriCorps members (29MSY) to increase our ability to meet the community's demand for nutrition education and household budgeting courses. Operation Frontline will place AmeriCorps members with 21 of its program locations across the country.

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AmeriCorps members work closely with local Operation Frontline staff to increase the number of community members served by Operation Frontline cooking-based nutrition education and budgeting courses. Members plan and coordinate Operation Frontline class series; each course is held in a community setting for 10 to 15 students and includes six two-hour sessions. Members assist in recruiting, training, and supporting culinary, nutrition and other volunteers. They develop and manage relationships with community agencies that host classes and work to increase public awareness of the Operation Frontline program. Members also oversee the actual class sessions including the provision of the necessary supplies and support of volunteers and beneficiaries.

The Operation Frontline courses organized by AmeriCorps members include:

\*Eating Right, teaching low-income adults with children how to prepare and shop sensibly for healthy meals on a limited budget. Nearly 8 of 10 participants are eating more vegetables as a result of the class.

\*Kids Up Front, teaching kids from ages 8 to 13 about healthy eating; how healthy eating affects their performance in school, sports and life in general, and how to make simple, nutritious foods at home using recipes provided and prepared in class.

\*Power of Eating Right, teaching teens how to make healthy food choices, and how to prepare healthy meals and snacks. Students report learning to eat a wider variety of foods (especially fruits and vegetables) and choose healthier snacks.

\*Side by Side, teaching school-age children with their families about healthy eating and the importance of eating together as a family.

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\*Step Up to Eating Right teaches teens that are pregnant and parenting about how to meet the nutritional needs of themselves and their young children.

\*Saving Smart, Spending Smart, teaching basic household budgeting, banking, credit and wise shopping to adults on low incomes.

The number and type of AmeriCorps members requested directly relate to each local program's plans for offering more Operation Frontline classes to existing sites, offering classes to new sites, or offering classes in new geographic regions. Numbers also take into account the current size and capacity of the local Operation Frontline programs, which range from 1 to 8 staff members.

As in the first three years of its AmeriCorps National Direct Grant, Share Our Strength will continue to ensure that members work only on approved activities and that the program does not violate the non-duplication, non-displacement, and non-supplementation requirements of the Corporation through several program measures. Share Our Strength provides ample training on this topic for onsite AmeriCorps supervisors and AmeriCorps members themselves. First, all Operation Frontline AmeriCorps program supervisors view a training that includes a review of permitted and prohibited member service activities as well as other supervisory responsibilities and requirements of the AmeriCorps program. Second, each local program develops a detailed work plan for their AmeriCorps member that is reviewed and approved by the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator during the first two weeks of a new member's term of service. Third, a review of activities limited or prohibited by the Corporation is included in Share Our Strength's new member orientation. Finally, Share Our Strength's host site monitoring process further ensures that members are engaged only in grant-approved activities through yearly host site visits conducted by Share Our Strength staff to Operation Frontline AmeriCorps host sites.

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### c) Measurable Outputs and Outcomes

AmeriCorps National Direct members have a direct and significant impact on the reach and quality of the Operation Frontline program in the communities they serve. Please refer to the program Performance Measures for specific program goals, outputs, and outcomes.

### d) Plan for Monitoring, Self-Assessment and Improvement

Share Our Strength ensures that all program requirements are met and that AmeriCorps members are positioned to succeed in each local program through ongoing support and supervision in their local placement. This includes:

\*Regular program monitoring to ensure that the local Operation Frontline program is active and on track. This includes the review of monthly progress reports from each local program as well as "trimester calls" held three times per year between Share Our Strength staff and the local Operation Frontline staff and their supervisors. The success of the AmeriCorps program is a regular topic of inquiry during these formal conversations as well as many informal conversations with local partners throughout the year.

\*Program reporting and monitoring for the AmeriCorps program specifically. Operation Frontline utilizes a monthly web-based reporting system for AmeriCorps members to describe their progress towards achieving both individual work plan goals, as well as overall program performance measure. Operation Frontline also uses this report as an opportunity to gather impact stories, positive/negative feedback from sites, or requests for training on specific topics.

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\*AmeriCorps members are encouraged to take part in all Operation Frontline training and support activities including monthly conference calls with the entire Operation Frontline network, participation in the Operation Frontline Annual Retreat for full-time members, and access to the Operation Frontline on-line resource center and Operation Frontline AmeriCorps on-line workspace.

Support and supervision offered at each local Operation Frontline local program includes:

\*A comprehensive on-site orientation to Operation Frontline and the local partner organization for each AmeriCorps member. This typically takes place over the first two weeks of service. Share Our Strength has established minimum requirements for what is to be covered. Policies and procedures regarding on-site orientation have been included in the Operation Frontline program supervisor and member manuals to ensure a standard of high-quality on-site orientations is met.

\*The commitment to provide the cost-share and allow members to take part in professional development and networking activities that impact their activities, and help them achieve goals as outlined in their work plan.

\*Consistent supervision from Operation Frontline local staff. Each local Operation Frontline program has one person who is responsible for supervising and supporting the AmeriCorps member. The site supervisor and the AmeriCorps member often work together, side-by-side, and interact each day.

\*Regular meetings to mark progress and provide feedback. Currently, it is recommended that the local Operation Frontline staff set aside regular times (biweekly for both full-time and half-time) to meet with AmeriCorps members.

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Share Our Strength continually assesses the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps\*National Direct program and regularly identifies area for improvement. Operation Frontline's host site monitoring policy and procedures involve an annual site visit, annual desktop audit and a tri-annual detailed financial/accounting site visit of each program partner hosting an AmeriCorps National Direct member.

The Operation Frontline National Program Coordinator based at Share Our Strength's national office, regularly collects data to track the program's progress toward achieving performance measures. This data is collected from four sources: monthly progress reports submitted by Operation Frontline local coordinators and AmeriCorps members, in-class observations, end-of-class surveys filled out by participants, and skills-inventories completed by members at the start and end of their service term.

Monthly progress reports serve as a data collection tool that gathers key information such as the number of classes completed and the number of participants served by Operation Frontline. AmeriCorps members are asked to report on their activities in three areas: class coordination, volunteer management, and skills-based development. In-class observations by local site coordinators or national staff monitor skills development amongst class participants in areas such as cooking, food-budgeting, and food safety. Participant surveys measure the end outcome of participants' behavioral change related to healthy eating, food safety, and household budgeting as a result of taking Operation Frontline courses.

In addition, Share Our Strength requires three month, seven month and exit reviews for all AmeriCorps members so that members can provide and receive direct feedback on their performance as well as share their concerns. Progress regarding both the member work plan and service hours are discussed to make sure members are tracking to successful completion of their service term. A development plan for both the member and local program is prepared if there are any major issues. Please see the Member

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Training and Support for more detail on how we gather feedback or resolve issues with members.

### e) Community Involvement

Operation Frontline was developed in response to the community need for high-quality behaviorally-focused nutrition education services. Our local partners, primarily food banks and community health organizations, work directly with the staff and low-income clients of community agencies to offer classes. The communities' overwhelmingly positive response to our courses (99% of participants would recommend the class to others) as well as local program coordinators' inability to meet the current demand for courses indicate that our basic goal of offering additional classes will continue to be well-received.

Because of their established familiarity with their communities' needs, our local partners have, and continue to, assist the Operation Frontline national office in identifying their needs and the planned activities for AmeriCorps members.

Additionally, local Operation Frontline programs are encouraged to recruit AmeriCorps\*National Direct members from the communities in which they serve. Aware of the advantages of working with community 'insiders', local Operation Frontline programs actively recruit members from the community, knowing that their perspective, skills, and knowledge can deeply enrich programming.

Share Our Strength continues to distribute reports three times per year to demonstrate progress and the growth of Operation Frontline nationally to the communities served and stakeholders involved. These reports explain our relationship with the AmeriCorps program, and highlight the achievements of AmeriCorps members.

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### f) Relationship to other National and Community Service Programs

Since the Operation Frontline program is collaborative in nature, hosting classes at hundreds of community agencies, our AmeriCorps\*National Direct project has the opportunity to partner and work with other national service programs. For example, in program year 2007-2008, an Operation Frontline AmeriCorps\*National Direct volunteer worked with ServeNebraska serving on its Nebraska InterCorps council developing and implementing statewide themes and activities for selected days, weeks and months of service for AmeriCorps members across Nebraska. More recently three Operation Frontline AmeriCorps members participated in the Massachusetts Service Alliance's 2009 Opening Day for the 2,000 Corps members serving in AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps VISTA programs in Massachusetts. The members enjoyed the opportunity to connect with others serving in Massachusetts and sharing their own experiences while also celebrating volunteerism in their state of service.

Operation Frontline AmeriCorps members have also collaborated with other National Service programs for joint training opportunities: some of our AmeriCorps members have even developed and provided trainings for other National Service teams on food-budgeting and healthy eating-important skills for AmeriCorps members living on limited stipends!

### g) Potential for Replication

Operation Frontline's collaborative structure is designed for program replication. Our goal is to provide local nonprofits with the tools and resources they need to provide Operation Frontline's effective model of chef-led nutrition education in the community. We aim to organize our services so that Share Our Strength is doing work to provide resources on the national level -- curricula, evaluation, implementation tools, and training -- while collaborating with local partners working on the ground with local volunteers and community agencies.



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We are constantly seeking out new local partners who are able to offer Operation Frontline's intensive chef-led programs in their communities. We have already identified two new local partners to begin the program in early 2010. In addition, nineteen of our twenty one current local programs are planning to host AmeriCorps members, and we anticipate bringing all programs on board as space and capacity concerns are addressed in the future. Operation Frontline also continues to explore alternate partnership models, such as work with culinary schools, school systems, and cooperative extension programs, which are likely to result in more families served and additional roles for AmeriCorps members. As local programs grow due to AmeriCorps members' service, we expect increased interest in establishing programs in new communities and are fortifying our infrastructure to meet that demand.

### **Organizational Capability**

Ability to Provide Sound Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight

Share Our Strength's extensive experience in developing and operating programs and partnerships has proven us highly qualified to implement AmeriCorps\*National Direct. We have demonstrated this through the successful integration of AmeriCorps\*National Direct program into our already-established Operation Frontline programs at highly-functioning nonprofit partners.

Share Our Strength has a franchise-style partnership with its Operation Frontline local program partners, except for Boston, MA and Denver, CO which Share Our Strength operates directly. Our nonprofit partners are selected based on their operational capacity, their experience with volunteer-based programs, relationships with class sites in the community, and commitment to providing high-quality nutrition and budgeting courses to low-income families. Potential partners undergo a thorough application and screening process before Share Our Strength enters a partnership with them. All programs enter into partnership with plans to create a sustainable, ongoing Operation Frontline

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program.

A contract outlines the relationship and partners agree to run Operation Frontline according to Share Our Strength's guidelines and operating procedures and designate at least one full-time program manager. Share Our Strength then provides extensive technical assistance, curricula and other program materials, evaluation services, and, in some cases, grants. Share Our Strength's relationships with its Operation Frontline partners allow us to maximize national and local resources to deliver a manageable and effective program. This collaborative arrangement has already resulted in over 5,010 courses serving over 59,000 low-income families.

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline successfully completed its second year managing an AmeriCorps\*National Direct program in August of 2009, and systems for managing and overseeing the AmeriCorps\*National Direct program were firmly established during its first two years. All sites submit monthly reports, participate in individual phone meetings with the national office three times per year, and receive one annual on-site monitoring visit from Share Our Strength staff. The Program Coordinator at the national office devotes 70 percent of her time managing all aspects of the AmeriCorps\*National Direct project, including recruitment, reporting, training and financial oversight.

Please see the "Sound Record of Accomplishment" for more information on Share Our Strength's support with its other platforms.

Board of Directors, Administrators, and Staff

The Share Our Strength staff members that will be responsible for programmatic and fiscal oversight are:

Janet McLaughlin, MPA, Operation Frontline Director-- Janet has served as the Director for Operation

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Frontline since 2005; she previously served as the Senior Manager for the Grants Department at Share Our Strength. She has a Masters in Public Administration from Syracuse University and earned her BA at Harvard University. Janet oversees the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator in administering the AmeriCorps\*National Direct grant.

Laura Seman, MPH, Operation Frontline Program Manager, Evaluation -- Laura began serving as the Program Manager, Evaluation in July of 2008 but previously held the position of Operation Frontline AmeriCorps Program Coordinator. Ms. Seman was the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps Program Coordinator at the start of the AmeriCorps\*National Direct grant period in August 2007. She has a Masters in Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with a concentration in Health Behavior and Health Education. Laura supports the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator in providing the Corporation for Community and National Service with accurate and timely program reports.

Hayley Beers, MSW, Operation Frontline AmeriCorps Program Coordinator -- Hayley began serving as the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator in July of 2008. She has a Masters in Social Work from Columbia University's School of Social Work, with a concentration in Social Enterprise Administration. A former AmeriCorps member, Hayley brings strong program management skills, personal experience serving in AmeriCorps programs and a dedication to national and community service. Hayley is the primary staff person responsible for managing all aspects of the AmeriCorps\*National Direct project including recruitment of members, training and support of members and local program staff and producing reports on the progress of Operation Frontline AmeriCorps members.

Eric Schweikert, MBA, Chief Financial Officer -- Eric holds a BA in Economics from Yale University and a MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Eric joined Share Our Strength in

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2008. Prior to that, he was CFO of the Global Financial Services segment at Capital One, home to Capital One's faster-growing businesses and \$29 billion in assets. Eric provides financial oversight for the program including payroll, administering health benefits to the AmeriCorps members, and cost share arrangements for the AmeriCorps\*National Direct project between Share Our Strength and its local partner agencies.

### Plan for Self-Assessment or Improvement

Share Our Strength knows that meeting our goal of ending childhood hunger will not happen without the strategic management of financial, human and material resources. To that end, Share Our Strength's board and senior staff engage in regular strategic planning sessions and all staff are involved in organization planning each year. Priorities are set for the organization overall and areas for improvement are identified. Each department creates an operating plan and budget with staffing, tactics, and a timetable. All activities are reviewed during the budget and planning process to ensure that we are maximizing our resources. Share Our Strength looks carefully to identify areas where technology integration can improve performance or provide efficiencies. The Board approves the overall operating plan and budget each year and progress is marked during regular meetings with the Managing Director. All staff members have individual annual work plans and undergo performance reviews twice a year, at six months and at year end.

Share Our Strength has annual programming agreements with each of our Operation Frontline partners outlining both parties' responsibilities including the number of courses planned each year. Local programs submit monthly progress reports to Share Our Strength detailing classes held, volunteer activity, networking and presentations and fundraising. The Operation Frontline Director and other Share Our Strength Operation Frontline staff review these reports each month to identify areas for improvement. Official calls to discuss the "state of the program" are held with each city three times per

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year, though informal communications continue year round. At least one on-site monitoring visit is made to each program each year.

### Plan for Effective Technical Assistance

Share Our Strength continues to use and modify already-established systems described elsewhere in this application for operating and overseeing the Operation Frontline local programs, and administering the AmeriCorps\*National Direct project. The Operation Frontline national staff continues to be responsible for managing and providing technical assistance to all Operation Frontline programs. The AmeriCorps Program Coordinator in the national office, the primary staff person responsible for managing the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps program, conducts a web-enabled conference call in fall of each program year to review current programmatic and financial policies and procedures of Share Our Strength's AmeriCorps\*National Direct grant and provide training to local program staff. The Coordinator also provides technical assistance through monthly conference calls, group trainings, management of the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps workspace and individual communications. Our local program staff knows that they can contact the Operation Frontline national office for fast and friendly assistance.

### Sound Record of Accomplishment as an Organization

#### Volunteer Generation and Support

As an organization, Share Our Strength is driven by volunteers. Each of Share Our Strength's six platforms, including Operation Frontline, Taste of the Nation, the Great American Dine Out, the Great American Bake Sale, the Dinner Series, and Tasteful Pursuit are volunteer-led. Through media campaigns, corporate volunteerism, word of mouth, and web-based communications, Share Our Strength recruits thousands of talented individuals, primarily from the culinary, restaurant, and food industries, to lead and organize hunger-fighting events in their communities.

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### Sound Record of Accomplishment as an Organization

#### Organizational and Community Leadership

Share Our Strength leads the fight to end hunger and poverty on local, national and international levels by inspiring and organizing individuals and businesses to share their strengths in collaborative ways. As our name suggests, we believe that "sharing strength" is the key to creating community change and structure our work around creating and supporting corporate and community leaders who implement Operation Frontline, Taste of the Nation, and the Great American Bake Sale in their cities. Since 1987, Taste of the Nation culinary events organized by community volunteers in over 40 cities have raised over \$70 million dollars to fight hunger and poverty. Since 1993, Operation Frontline has worked with hundreds of volunteers to teach over 59,000 families about healthy low-cost cooking. Since 2003, the Great American Bake Sale has raised more than \$5 million with more than 1.3 million people baking, selling or buying to support child nutrition programs.

Founder and Executive Director Bill Shore was named one of "America's Best Leaders" US News & World Report in October 2005, as selected by an independent committee of judges assembled by the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Managing Director Pat Nicklin serves on the Board of the Alliance to End Hunger, the primary national anti-hunger umbrella organization for the nonprofit, public, and private sectors and the board of the National Association of Hunger Organizations.

Operation Frontline was singled out as the only nonprofit partner receiving "Special Recognition" by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Services division at their national conference in September 2005 for "providing innovative and excellent nutrition education to FNS program participants." Operation

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Frontline national staff members serve on the Society for Nutrition Education Foundation board of trustees, the Hunger and Environmental Nutrition practice group for the American Dietetics Association, and the Food and Nutrition group of the American Public Health Association. Many of our local Operation Frontline staff members also participate in their state nutrition networks, dietetic associations, culinary groups, anti-hunger coalitions, and community health collaboratives.

### Success in Securing Match Resources

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline has succeeded in securing the match resources outlined for its AmeriCorps National Direct program thus far and anticipates continued success. Share Our Strength has secured national sponsorship of Operation Frontline from the ConAgra Foods Foundation and also receives financial support from individual donors and foundations. Our local nonprofit partners have committed to raising private local funds to support program costs as well as make the in-kind contribution of staff time to recruit, train and supervise AmeriCorps members. This sharing of both direct and in-kind costs is similar to how Operation Frontline successfully funded its AmeriCorps\*VISTA program for six years (2001-2007). By sharing costs and leveraging current resources, Operation Frontline continues to ensure that the financial burden is shared by all and manageable for each partner.

### Success in Securing Community Support

#### Collaboration

Share Our Strength is a collaborative organization by design. We recognize that each person and organization has different strengths to share and design programs that allow them contribute their talents where they make the biggest difference. We rely on the support of the community to raise funds and awareness that then support Operation Frontline and thousands of nonprofits across the country through Taste of the Nation and the Great American Bake Sale. We also have partners in the restaurant

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industry such as California Tortilla Kitchen, Joe's Crab Shack and the Corner Bakery; all restaurants that participate in the Great American Dine out to raise funds and awareness for Share Our Strength's operations.

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline, as discussed throughout this proposal, aims to maximize national and local resources through collaboration. We partner with local nonprofits who are interested in offering high-quality nutrition education but need curriculum and training. Those organizations then partner with local community agencies who want to provide nutrition and financial education to their clients. This arrangement maximizes the quality of the programming provided while reducing duplicative efforts since all of these organizations can rely on one tested and true model and receive support in implementation. Local partners often partner with local faith-based organizations including afterschool programs, transitional living facilities and churches with low-income members to provide classes in their facilities.

### Local Financial and In-Kind Contributions

The cost to run Operation Frontline is shared between Share our Strength and our local partner organizations. Share Our Strength works with corporate partners, foundations, and individual donors in order to obtain funds to support Operation Frontline. Recent examples of supports include the ConAgra Foods Foundation and a percentage of the proceeds from Share Our Strength's own Taste of the Nation events. The national Operation Frontline office provides all curricula, program materials, training, and evaluation services to partner organizations free of charge due to the sustained and growing support that we receive for the Operation Frontline program.

Local partner organizations pay for the costs of implementing Operation Frontline on a local level by raising public and private funds primarily to support staff, food and transportation costs. As Operation



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Frontline has grown, funding has grown and expanded. Share Our Strength has made funding available to our local partners in a competitive process to encourage innovation and capacity-building on a local level. In addition, several local programs are now included in their states' Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) plan and are able to receive partial reimbursement for program costs from that source. Share Our Strength is providing technical assistance to local program not yet receiving SNAP-Ed funds on how to approach the state to be included in the plan.

### Wide Range of Community Stakeholders

Share Our Strength's anti-hunger efforts worldwide would not have been possible without the support of our primary stakeholders: volunteers. Share Our Strength continues to find innovative ways for individuals to share their strengths to make an impact. Over the years, we have helped expand the scope of our work from engaging some of America's most talented and successful chefs to providing a way for thousands of individuals, including children, to take leadership roles in our anti-hunger efforts. The Great American Bake Sale, begun in 2003, has engaged over 1.3 million Americans as bakers, sellers, and buyers. Taste of Nation has grown from raising tens of thousands of dollars to over \$4 million each year. Our corporate partnerships are designed to maximize community benefit while helping companies meet their objectives as well; partners include American ConAgra Foods Foundation, Domino Sugar and C&H Sugar, Food Network, Quaker Oats, Stella Artois, and Weight Watchers. From a single Operation Frontline program in Washington DC, we now have 24 local programs engaging hundreds of volunteers -- chefs, nutritionists, financial planners, and other community members -- in providing families with the skills they need to get the most nutrition out of a limited budget. As our Founder Bill Shore said in his book *The Cathedral Within*, "Everyone has a strength to share. Often it is a skill or a talent that they've come to take for granted, but one that can make the difference in the life of somebody else."

### Cost Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy

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### 1. Cost Effectiveness

#### a) Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (MSY)

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline requests \$12,954.80 per MSY in Corporation funding.

#### b) Diverse Non-Federal Support

Share Our Strength and our Operation Frontline partners have a long history of raising funds from diverse public and private sources. Share Our Strength raises matching funds for this project exclusively from private sources through corporate partnerships and our Taste of the Nation culinary fundraising events. Our local nonprofit partners commit to raising private local funds to support part of the costs of the program; they use a portion of the foundation, corporate, and individual donations that they raise to cover the local costs of their OFL program. Local partners also commit to an in-kind contribution of staff time to recruit, train, and supervise AmeriCorps members. By sharing costs and leveraging current resources, Operation Frontline ensures that the fundraising burden is manageable for each partner.

#### c.) Decreased Reliance on Federal Support:

Operation Frontline continues to pursue funding from other resources, and create sustainable and expansive programming which will help to decrease our reliance on federal support. Most of our CNCS support for the AmeriCorps National Direct grant is dedicated to direct member cost, and Operation Frontline anticipates the percentage of CNCS funds supporting indirect program support costs to remain stable (at or around 50% of total project costs) or decrease throughout the grant cycle, even as we reach program goals over the next 3 years.

### 2. Budget Adequacy

Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline has successfully developed programming and funding partnerships across the country for the last sixteen years. The Operation Frontline AmeriCorps National

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Direct program fits naturally into our current program operations and allows us to leverage current resources for maximum impact. Operation Frontline relied on its successful implementation of an AmeriCorps National Direct program over the past two years to guide our programmatic and financial planning for this grant. Our experience teaches us that our National AmeriCorps Program Coordinator needs to dedicate approximately 75% of her time to supporting and training members and local site coordinators. Since AmeriCorps members join an already existing training network, we remain confident of our estimates for the costs in training and supervision. In addition, we feel that the living allowances projected are reasonable given the quality of the experience that we will provide AmeriCorps members, the allowances given to our past VISTA members and current National Direct members, and the ability for AmeriCorps\*National Direct members to take advantage of outside employment opportunities. Local programs will continue to have the option of providing additional transportation or housing subsidies to candidates that they feel merit or need supplemental income.

The services AmeriCorps members provide will continue to allow Operation Frontline to increase the number of courses provided to low-income families over the next three years by 290 courses each year. This target is based on the goal of having each AmeriCorps member coordinate ten courses (six weeks in length) per year for each of the next three years, a plan for significant measured growth that is possible with AmeriCorps members engaging new volunteers, working with new host agencies, and providing local Operation Frontline staff with greater opportunity to engage in strategic actions that will sustain the program in the future. When local staff is not consumed with the responsibility of managing all aspects of class coordination, they are better able to develop advisory boards and task forces, develop strategic community partnerships with culinary schools or community funding collaborative, and develop tools that make class coordination more efficient. At the same time, we continue to explore additional partnerships at the national level that will enhance the turn-key nature of Operation Frontline to ensure that the increase of 290 courses per year is achieved.

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### Evaluation Summary or Plan

Share Our Strength commits significant resources to measuring the scope and effectiveness of Cooking Matters.

Program outputs for Cooking Matters are monitored through a dynamic, online database, recently created and customized for Cooking Matters' information and reporting needs. Cooking Matters Lead Partners use this tool to store program information and metrics, including course activity, volunteer and agency records, donations and funding resources, local media coverage received, and outreach and networking events held in their community. The online database is used at a national level to monitor program outputs, trends, and progress against local and national goals.

Share Our Strength also maintains an internet survey that Cooking Matters Lead Partners use to assess their satisfaction of volunteer instructors as well as to glean anonymous feedback. Volunteers received a link to the survey immediately following their completion of a course. Data are then sent to the national office, where it is cleaned and analyzed.

Additionally, Share Our Strength also uses a third party to administer an anonymous internet survey to all Cooking Matters Lead Partner staff and AmeriCorps members with similar goals in mind: to assess satisfaction and glean feedback for program improvement.

### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

Q1: The application states that members are recruited nationally and from the local community.

However, no information is provided about the make-up of previous member cohorts. As a result, it is unclear how diverse the member corps is, and how many members actually come from the local

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community. Please explain how Share Our Strength (SOS) ensures that its member recruitment plan will result in a diverse member corps, including members from the target community, and provide data about the make-up of the current 2009 member cohort.

A1: Share Our Strength affirms its commitment to a diverse member cohort and works diligently to promote an inclusive member corps. We constantly seek opportunities to enroll and maintain underrepresented groups in our member cohort -- and recognize the benefits of including members of similar backgrounds to our program participants.

Currently, our active AmeriCorps members range in age from 21-52 years; with 14% of our members over the age of 30. 19 of the 21 active members holding either culinary degrees (2 full time members are trained chefs) or bachelors degrees in areas of studies that include biology, nutrition, journalism, etc. Twenty percent of our current member cohort self- identify as being Asian, Hispanic or Black. Beyond diversity in age, education, race and ethnicity, Share Our Strength's member corps has become increasingly gender inclusive, growing from a 0% male cohort in grant year 2008 to a 24% male cohort in grant year 2009, percentages that reflect national trends within the female-dominated fields of nutrition and education.

Our AmeriCorps members are recruited, in a collaborative effort, by the Operation Frontline National Program Coordinator and the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps supervisors at each AmeriCorps host site. Share Our Strength encourages its AmeriCorps supervisors to recruit from their local communities and many supervisors have secured members through local position postings in area publications or institutions. Supervisors also use word of mouth at their host site organization to recruit current volunteers or former clients to become AmeriCorps members. This local level recruitment has led to the grant year 2009 enrollment of two AmeriCorps members who were volunteers at their local Operation

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Frontline programs and a cohort in which over 90% of members were residents of the state in which they now serve.

Share Our Strength also encourages its AmeriCorps supervisors to "think outside of the box" when it comes to member recruitment. In grant year 2009 the Operation Frontline National Program Coordinator provided support to an AmeriCorps supervisor at the New Hampshire Food Bank as she attempted to recruit former clients of the Food Bank who were enrolled in a supportive employment program designed to assist these low-income individuals with psychiatric disabilities (such as depression).

We also provide training to AmeriCorps members and supervisors on working with those who have different backgrounds than them, especially in the most common situation of AmeriCorps members and volunteers who are from groups who are traditionally "valued" in American society serving participants from groups traditionally least valued. The most recent example of this is a training on "Connecting Across Differences" offered at our Operation Frontline Annual Summit in late April 2010 in which we explored the concept and personal experience of oppression, identified ways it could consciously or subconsciously expressed in class, and practiced ways to prevent or address it.

Q2: The application notes that SOS develops an ethic of service by providing members with unspecified training and development opportunities, as well as a Life after AmeriCorps session and encouragement to engage in service learning and connect with their State Office. Please provide examples of the specific training and professional development opportunities that members receive on this topic. Also, please explain whether your plan provides members with structured opportunities for reflection throughout their terms, or if it is only during the Life after AmeriCorps training.

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A2: Development of an ethic of service is cultivated in the day-to-day service activities of every member and AmeriCorps supervisor and in formal trainings provided to both members and supervisors each year.

The nature of the work that Operation Frontline AmeriCorps members and supervisors are engaged in, volunteer recruitment and management, acts to develop an ethic of service. By recruiting and managing volunteers, members constantly provide service and service-learning opportunities to others and are constantly engaged in encouraging service in others.

All of our members also receive formal service-learning trainings. Each year members participate in an orientation process that includes a 60 minute web-conference in which AmeriCorps and an ethic of service is explored with each member. There are three additional 60 web-conference trainings that involve member reflection on their AmeriCorps service: 1) an exploration on AmeriCorps Week and how to encourage service in others; 2) AmeriCorps Alums, a topic for which a member of the AmeriCorps Alums staff is an invited guest speaker; 3) Life after AmeriCorps training that highlights an ethic of service and encourages members to incorporate service into their personal and professional lives following their service years. These lessons shared during these web-conferences are reinforced during an in-person Member Service Reflection training held at Operation Frontline's Annual Summit.

Members are also provided with structured opportunities for reflection throughout their terms in the form of their 3, 7 and exit month member evaluation forms which include reflection questions asking each member to examine their accomplishments, struggles, areas of growth and future goals. Exit evaluations and exit interviews also inquire about member's future intentions regarding service and the pursuit of service professions are encouraged among our AmeriCorps graduates by Operation Frontline

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staff. To date 4 former Operation Frontline National Direct members have been hired by their host site organizations to continue working on the Operation Frontline program in their communities.

Finally, an ethic of service and service learning for members is promoted through the creation of blog entries for Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry blog. In these posts members are asked to reflect on a memorable event that has occurred during their service year and to consider their impact on their Operation Frontline participants. They are also asked to reflect on what service means to them and to view their service activities in the context of the larger service movement in our country.

AmeriCorps supervisors receive formal training during their orientation process on the ethic of service and on AmeriCorps's structure and mission and are reminded throughout the program year of the importance of encouraging their members to place their Operation Frontline service within the context of the larger service movement.

Q3: The application explains how member satisfaction is measured, but does not address how members are rewarded. Please explain how SOS rewards its members.

A3: Share Our Strength focuses its efforts on ensuring that members' experience with Operation Frontline is as rewarding as possible. Share Our Strength and our Operation Frontline program partners work hard to maintain a caring environment so that AmeriCorps members feel well-supported throughout their terms of service. When we ask members what the most special part of their AmeriCorps experience has been, we almost always receive one of two answers: 1) the reactions and comments from families who talk about the changes they've make to their cooking and eating habits as a result of the course, or 2) being part of a strong, close-knit team.



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We also recognize the need to provide tangible rewards that indicate that we value our AmeriCorps members and their commitment to service. Share Our Strength provides a.) a welcome packet complete with a Share Our Strength wrist band and information on Share Our Strength, Operation Frontline, AmeriCorps and on applying for food and housing assistance b.) a holiday gift in December of each program year and c.) a graduation gift upon completion of their member service year. In grant year 2009 Share Our Strength gifted each member an Operation Frontline t-shirt and Share Our Strength reusable grocery tote in December 2009 and chose, based on member feedback, to give each exiting member a \$15 gift card to Starbucks (this is NOT paid for out of funds included in the CNCS grant as match or request).

Share Our Strength also encourages its AmeriCorps host sites to acknowledge the significant contributions made by their Operation Frontline AmeriCorps members. Many of our sites host welcome lunches and good-bye parties for their members. For example at the Tarrant Area Food Bank each graduating member is taken out to lunch by the nutrition education staff where they are given a small gift, such as a book, and are congratulated on the successful completion of their term of service. (Costs for these activities are also NOT included in the CNCS grant as match or request.)

Q4: Please provide a plan for improving member retention.

A4: To improve member retention, Share Our Strength will provide additional coaching on member recruitment and support to its AmeriCorps supervisors. This plan is based on exit interviews with members that have exited the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps program "for cause" who have described their reasons for early exiting to be based primarily on the discovery that the AmeriCorps program was

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not a good fit with their lives. For example one member that was exited for cause in the 2008 grant year did not feel that her supervisor explained the expected hours of service and ultimately found that she was not able or willing to complete her service hours during the times expected of her by her supervisor.

Share Our Strength believes that in coaching its supervisors to better explain the requirements and responsibilities of members during their Operation Frontline service year that member retention will increase as members will be better matched with their host site and the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps program. New supervisor orientation, planned for June 2010, will place special attention on the recruitment process and provide templates for interviewing and screening members so that member position offers can be extended to individuals who best match the AmeriCorps Operation Frontline program and are fully aware of the responsibilities expected of them as AmeriCorps members at their future host sites. Additional training to be provided to supervisors early in the 2010 grant year will include a web-conference on identifying members' talents and interests and creating a strong member development plan.

By providing training to AmeriCorps supervisors on how to best support their AmeriCorps members (providing training, opportunities for feedback and ongoing member recognition at the local level) that member satisfaction at host sites can be enhanced and ultimately member retention also improved.

Q5: The application indicates that the National Operation Frontline Coordinator will spend 75% time on the grant. This was not enough time for the coordinator to manage 14 sites during the previous grant, and therefore it is not sufficient time to manage more sites given the increased amount of training, oversight and monitoring involved with bringing on new sites. Please review this line item and increase the amount of staff time on the grant. Additionally, the application narrative indicates that each site partner will designate at least one full-time program manager for the program, but the budget specifies

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site supervisors at 10% time. Please explain this discrepancy, and specify how much on-site management and supervision is available to operating the program and supervise members.

A5: In the 2.5 years that Share Our Strength has had a National Direct program, the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps National Program coordinator spent 50% of her time successfully managing 14 sites. This successful management of the National Direct program was most recently highlighted in the 2009 National Progress Report Feedback and Close provided to Share Our Strength by the Corporation in January 22, 2010. The 2009 feedback did not identify any compliance concerns, other issues or recommendations. However, it did include notes complementary of the program's strengthening of site support, communication and monitoring plans; all achieved with 50% of the AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator's time. Share Our Strength also received positive feedback from its program officer at the time, Rob Glazier, following his site visit to our Tarrant Area Food Bank and North Texas Food Bank host sites in Summer 2009.

Share Our Strength is confident that 75% of the AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator's time will be sufficient to successfully manage 21 AmeriCorps members at 21 host sites. In our current application/plan we would be matching a 50% increase in members with a 50% increase in dedicated staff time, in addition to our recently-secured outside support for the financial reporting component of program management. Additional reasons that we believe that 75% is sufficient include the economies of scale, our larger support model for each host site, and dedicated program staff on the ground for each program.

- Economies of scale: Much of the technical assistance, training and support provided to AmeriCorps host sites benefit from an economy of scale. For example the AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator does not spend any additional hours preparing web-conference or in-person trainings for a

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group of 14 supervisors or members than she does for a group of 21 supervisors or members. Similarly there is no additional burden on the AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator's resources/time when it comes to updating program policies and procedures via Operation Frontline's AmeriCorps online workspace or program manuals.

- Larger support model: On the local level each AmeriCorps host site runs a full Operation Frontline program as part of their larger franchise-style partnership with Share Our Strength to provide our nutrition education courses to their clients. (Please see Question 8 for more details on Operation Frontline's program model.)

- Dedicated on-the-ground staff: Share Our Strength's programming agreement with each host site requires that each partner organization dedicate a full-time staff member to manage the Operation Frontline program locally. For program partners that wish to host AmeriCorps members, the expectation is that the full-time local program manager, commits 10% of their time to the specific administrative and supervisory responsibilities required of AmeriCorps supervisors (providing regular supervision, conducting member evaluations, tracking program expenses and submitting financial reports to the AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator). The remaining 90% of our AmeriCorps supervisors' time is spent in supporting the Operation Frontline program and our supervisors work very closely (often in pairs) with their AmeriCorps members on a daily basis. This is why our application narrative indicates that each host site will designate at least one full-time program manager to be the official AmeriCorps supervisor and that this individual will spend 10% of their time on AmeriCorps-specific tasks.

We recognize that there were serious issues related to the timeliness of financial reporting in the Fall of 2009 and early Winter of 2010. We do not believe that these issues were related to the programmatic

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capacity of the Operation Frontline AmeriCorps program and have taken major steps to establish clear and successful systems. Please see question 7 for more detail on our plans.

Q6: The application narrative lists an "OFL Program Manager" as working on the grant, but this position is not in the budget. Please explain this role, how this person will interact with the National Operation Frontline Coordinator, and how much time they will dedicate to the grant.

A6: Thank you for pointing out that this line item was included. It was an error and we have modified the budget to remove the "OFL Program Manager, Evaluation." This staff member served as the OFL AmeriCorps Program Coordinator in the first year of this grant and served as an advisor to the current OFL AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator in the next (second) year.

Q7: In the past SOS had difficulty submitting FFRs and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act 1512 reports on time. In a subsequent corrective action plan, SOS stated that it has hired an outside financial consultant responsible for all financial reporting. However, this position is not discussed in the application. Please explain who will be responsible for financial reporting for this AmeriCorps grant, and how this person will work with the National Operation Frontline Coordinator.

A7: Share Our Strength has made significant investments in our federal grant financial reporting structure since the several incidents this fall and winter in which reports were submitted late. We were embarrassed by the breakdown that occurred due to the learning curve associated with increased reporting requirements (because we had two separate grants and one with additional requirements) as well as lack of coordination between our program and financial staff.

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We have retained RAFFA, a top accounting consulting firm, to assist us with our federal financial reporting. This decision was made after we had submitted our original application in January which is why it is not discussed in the application. We recently shared a memo that detailed RAFFA's findings and recommendations and documented the necessary procedures. Both the internal and the external review found that the key issues were not in tracking and documentation of expenses but in the actual filing of the reports. RAFFA will continue support Share Our Strength in submitting its financial reports in the future.

Our process includes the steps outlined below, each overseen by RAFFA expert consultant:

- Fifteen days after the close of each financial quarter, the Senior Accountant will provide a detailed general ledger report for the AmeriCorps grant to the OFL AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator.
- The Coordinator will review and note any corrections or omissions for the Senior Accountant to correct.
- The Coordinator, Senior Accountant, and RAFFA consultant will meet to review the ledger and ensure all expenses are documented correctly.
- The Senior Accountant and the RAFFA consultant will prepare the necessary financial reports.
- The Senior Accountant and the RAFFA consultant will submit drafted financial reports with back-up documentation to the Operation Frontline National Director for review and final approval.
- Following final approval by the National Director, the Senior Accountant and RAFFA consultant will share final financial reporting data with the National Program Coordinator.
- The National Program Coordinator will submit eGrants financial reports using financial reporting data provided to her by the Senior Accountant and RAFFA consultant.
- The Senior Accountant will submit the PMS FFR report and conduct the PMS drawdown.

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Reporting deadlines are placed on Share Our Strength's staff's internal calendars and are reinforced through monthly meetings with Share Our Strength's Chief Financial Officer, AP Clerk, Senior Accountant, Operation Frontline AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator, and Operation Frontline National Director. These meetings ensure reporting on the AmeriCorps grant is made an organizational priority so that deadlines are not missed and allow for early identification and resolution of reporting challenges (such as technical issues with reporting sites).

Q8: Please provide more details about how technical assistance that is provided to sites. It is unclear how the OFL Coordinator is able to provide all needed technical assistance to sites.

A8. Share Our Strength has a seven-member national team that is dedicated to helping our local program staff run the most effective nutrition education program possible in their local communities. The support provided by the AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator is an extra layer of AmeriCorps-specific support on an already robust collaborative partnership model.

All Operation Frontline national staff has a basic level of training on the AmeriCorps program. All staff answers basic questions as they come up and refers questions on to the National Program Coordinator if unsure of the answer. Each time any Operation Frontline national staff member visits an Operation Frontline program, we check in with AmeriCorps members and complete an "AmeriCorps Host Site checklist" to ensure administrative compliance. Each member of the team serves as "eyes and ears" for the National Program Coordinator in our regular interactions with local programs and AmeriCorps members -- and we're often able to flag any issues quickly in that way.

The technical training and support provided by Share Our Strength's national office includes assistance

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related to Operation Frontline's curriculum and program implementation, as well as training on volunteer management, fundraising, strategy, and other program management topics. Approximately 100 hours of training and technical assistance is provided to each site annually, through monthly conference calls, yearly site visits, semi-annual multi-day group trainings at Conference of Leaders and the Annual Summit, and regular one-on-one communications.

There is also technical assistance provided between AmeriCorps host sites through active collaboration among Operation Frontline programs partners. Through many different avenues like our online Resource Center, monthly conference calls, and in-person conferences each year, Operation Frontline program partners have the opportunity to network and learn from one another.

Q9: Please describe the consultation process between SOS and State Commissions of each State in which it intends to operate, and the nature of the consultation.

A9: The Operation Frontline National Program Coordinator sent an introductory email with a completed "Initial Consultation Form" to each Commission in late November 2009. This introductory email included an invitation to speak via phone to answer questions and to provide clarifications to each State Commission. (Staff from the Commissions in DC, NE, NH, TX, IL and GA responded and we discussed Share Our Strength's National Direct grant application with them. No follow-up action or grant application clarifications were requested by any of the state commissions that the National Program Coordinator spoke with. However, as a result of the Program Coordinator's conversation with the Texas service commission she was invited to apply for a scholarship to attend the CNCS SW Cluster Conference in Dallas, TX in Spring 2010. The Program Coordinator applied and received the scholarship to attend the SW Cluster Conference and was able to benefit from the in-person trainings



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and networking events offered in Dallas this past spring.

Letters or emails were received from GA, NC, MA, MN, or WA service commissions stating that there was no follow-up action required on Share Our Strength's part. No response was received from CO, MI, OR, NY, FL, NJ, or MO service commissions.

Q10: Please provide justification for the increase in the cost/MSY from the previous year.

Increases seen in MSYs is due primarily to a raise in living stipend and in increased training provided to our AmeriCorps members.

A10: Our cost/MSY is budgeted to increase from \$24,875 to \$26,568, a 6.8% increase. This increase is largely due to the following 4 reasons: 1.) increased member living stipends and benefits, 2.) higher health care costs, 3.) additional member travel and 4.) increased other operating costs.

Increased Member Living Stipends and Benefits: There was a \$400 (3%) increase in the required minimum living stipend for grant year 2010 (from \$11,400 in 2009 per full-time member). This required increase in per MSY costs not only increased the cost of the living stipend to Share Our Strength but also the member support costs associated with each MSY since workers compensation and other benefits are calculated as a percentage of the total living stipend.

Higher Health Insurance Costs: Health insurance premiums paid by Share Our Strength for each of its full-time members increased from \$127 to \$145 per month, a 14% increase.

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Additional Member Travel: Member travel expenses have increased by 37% from grant year 2009 with the addition of a second multi-day in-person training (Conference of Leaders in addition to the Operation Frontline Annual Summit) for full-time AmeriCorps members.

Increased Other Operating Costs: The hiring of an outside grant reporting expert from RAFFA, slight increases in the costs for outside trainers for both the OFL Annual Summit and Conference of Leaders and the addition of a trainer for supervisors at the OFL Annual Summit.

Q11: Criminal History Check Requirement: Criminal history checks are required for all grant funded staff and AmeriCorps members. A detailed description of the requirements can be found at: <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/criminal-history>. Please verify that you criminal history checks will be conducted on all grant funded staff and members.

A11: Share Our Strength is committed to keeping vulnerable populations safe and recognizes the importance of complying with CNCS regulations on criminal history checks. Following our first year as a National Direct program we addressed the issue of criminal history checks in detail, seeking guidance not only from our program officer but from other National Direct programs across the country. Based on our consultations with CNCS and with other National Direct programs we adopted a policy and procedure for criminal history background checks that involves our careful review of the criminal history check requirements with all of our AmeriCorps supervisors who are then tasked with conducting checks on all grant funded staff and AmeriCorps members.

Operation Frontline AmeriCorps supervisors conduct a criminal history check in their state and in their member's state of residency at the time of AmeriCorps application. Supervisors also conduct a search of the National Sex Offenders Public Registry (NSOPR) for each AmeriCorps member. The results of the

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state criminal history and NSOPR searches are reviewed by the AmeriCorps supervisor and stored in a secure location at the host site. The supervisors submit copies to the Operation Frontline National Program Coordinator who reviews the searches before enrolling the member into the AmeriCorps eGrants system.

### Continuation Changes

Year 2 Continuation Changes

NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR IN YEAR 2:

Direct oversight of the Cooking Matters AmeriCorps program and direct supervision of the Cooking Matters AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator falls under Leigh Ann Edwards MPH, RD, Cooking Matters National Program Operations Director rather than Janet McLaughlin, Cooking Matters National Director.

NEW SITE LOCATIONS:

New Orleans, LA and Portland, ME in place of Chicago, IL and Omaha, NE

JUSTIFICATION FOR EXPANSION TO NEW SITES

Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters' collaborative structure is designed to maximize local and national resources and form a sustainable system. Each of our 21 Cooking Matters Lead Partners that will host 1 full-time AmeriCorps member each in grant year '11-'12, implements the program, handling everything from staffing and fundraising to managing volunteer networks and participant relationships. Current Lead Partners include food banks, community health organizations, and multiservice nonprofits. Share Our Strength has a franchise-style partnership with these agencies through which we provide Cooking Matters curricula, program materials, evaluation services, extensive training and technical assistance, and direct assistance from AmeriCorps members. These services are free of charge for our Lead Partners that have a program agreement with Share Our Strength to implement Cooking Matters courses in accordance with Cooking Matters program guidelines.

Demand for our program is high and our growth is projected to include an addition of five new Lead

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Partners in '11-'12. This overall growth of the Cooking Matters has resulted in an increased demand for AmeriCorps members to assist our growing number of Lead Partners in providing our curricula to children and families in their local communities.

The support provided by AmeriCorps members allows Cooking Matters Lead Partners, including our two new partners in both Louisiana and Maine, to reach even more families, providing more families with lifelong skills to select, purchase, and prepare healthy, low-cost meals.

The AmeriCorps members that will be placed at our new sites/Lead Partners will add real value to the Cooking Matters program by coordinating courses for our low income participants: for example between June -- November 2010 our AmeriCorps members coordinated approximately 25% of all of our Cooking Matters courses nationally during that time period. These skills enable participants in improving the use of their resources so they can feed all members of their family adequately and nutritiously. Whether it's how to cut up a whole chicken, use unit pricing at the grocery store, or select ripe fruits and vegetables, AmeriCorps members know that the graduates of their Cooking Matters courses can use the skills taught for years to come.

\*Organizational capacity:

Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters has successfully developed programming and funding partnerships across the country since 1993 and has a total of nine and a half years experience administering AmeriCorps grants; 6 years operating an AmeriCorps VISTA program and the past 3.5 years operating an AmeriCorps National Direct program.

Our nonprofit Lead Partners are selected based on their operational capacity, their experience with volunteer- based programs, relationships with potential or current course sites in the community, and commitment to providing high-quality nutrition and budgeting courses to low-income families.

Potential Lead Partners undergo a thorough application and screening process before Share Our Strength enters a partnership with them. All programs enter into partnership with plans to create a sustainable, ongoing Cooking Matters program.

## Narratives

Annual signed Cooking Matters programming contracts outline the relationship between Share Our Strength and each Lead Partner. Each Lead Partners agrees to run Cooking Matters, and the Cooking Matters AmeriCorps program, according to Share Our Strength's guidelines and operating procedures and designate at least one full-time program manager. Lead Partners also sign AmeriCorps hosting contracts agreeing to recruit, screen, and select Cooking Matters AmeriCorps members each year. Share Our Strength then provides extensive technical assistance, curricula and other program materials, evaluation services, and, in some cases, grants. Share Our Strength's relationships with its Cooking Matters Lead Partners allow us to maximize national and local resources to deliver a manageable and effective program.

### EXPLANATION OF ANY CHANGES IN THE BUDGET:

1. Increase in living stipend from \$12,000 to \$12,245 per MSY (exceeding \$12,100 CNCS minimum).
2. Increase in % of effort and salary for AmeriCorps National Senior Coordinator from 75% of \$44,100 (\$33,075) to 80% of \$45,400 (\$35,320).
3. Increase in Summit costs from \$9,660 to \$10,290. Based on increases federal per diem rates for '11 and increased CNCS consultant fee of \$613/day (up from \$500/day).
4. Increase in Conference of Leaders costs from \$18,459 to \$19,698. Based on increases federal per diem rates for '11 and increased CNCS consultant fee of \$613/day (up from \$500/day).
5. Increase in Local Member Transportation from \$10,500 to \$15,330 or \$500/MSY to or \$730/MSY. Based on Quarterly Financial reports from Lead Partners indicating that members drive, on average, 30 miles per week x 4 weeks x 12 months and are reimbursed at \$0.51/mile (POV mileage reimbursement rate for 2011) = \$734.40 or approximately \$730/MSY.
6. Increase in Supervisor Training sessions at CM Annual Retreat for Supervisors from \$1,050 to \$2,326. Based on increase from 1 to 2 trainers and increased CNCS daily consultant rate of \$613/day. Increase in number of trainers stemming from Share Our Strength's desire to provide more training and coaching to Lead Partner staff on how to create rewarding AmeriCorps service years for both member

## Narratives

and supervisor.

7. Increase in Member Training sessions at Annual Summit from \$2,100 to \$2,326. Based on increased CNCS daily consultant rate of \$613/day.

8. Increase in Member Training sessions at Conference of Leaders for Supervisors from \$2,100 to \$2,326. Based on increased CNCS daily consultant rate of \$613/day.

9. Changes in Member Support Costs:

\* FICA and Workers Compensation costs slightly increased as these amounts are based on formulas using the member living stipend which increased from \$12,000 to \$12,245.

\* Elimination of line item, Unemployment. Removed based on advice of Raffa financial consultant as Share Our Strength is not required to provide unemployment benefits to AmeriCorps members who are viewed as "volunteers". CNCS Grants officer was also contacted and did not provide any conflicting advice/guidance.

10. Increase in Corporation Fixed Percentage from \$56,913 to \$57,916 based on fixed percentage formula.

JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY INCREASE IN REQUESTED COST PER MSY:

n/a

11. Addition of Criminal Background Check costs to implement new required FBI finger print based checks on all AmeriCorps members and supervisors reporting time on the AmeriCorps grant with access to vulnerable populations. Calculated at \$70/person x 44 people = \$3,080 in program match costs.

PLANS FOR IMPROVING ENROLLMENT, RETENTION, OR OTHER COMPLIANCE ISSUES:

\*Retention: Out of our 14.5 MSYs in grant year three, we were unable to fill/re-fill one MSY when a member in her mid-30s left our program to pursue a full-time position within her field of expertise. We view this as a unique situation but are taking steps to safeguard against future such losses of AmeriCorps members. For instance, Share Our Strength revised its supervisor orientation which now better emphasizes the need to communicate the importance of committing to a full service year to all

## Narratives

potential members. It also reminds supervisors to use the signed member contracts, required of all our AmeriCorps members, as a means of stressing their commitment to serve. Share Our Strength continues to encourage our AmeriCorps supervisors to request, and check, references for all AmeriCorps applicants. We have also begun to require a national level interview for all final potential AmeriCorps candidates at our Cooking Matters AmeriCorps Lead Partners. This national level interview is a chance for the AmeriCorps National Coordinator to ensure that each future Cooking Matters AmeriCorps member fully understands the commitment they are preparing to embark upon and to ensure that they understand that they are agreeing to complete a full term of service.

### STATE COMMISSION CONSULTATION:

The Cooking Matters AmeriCorps National Program Coordinator sent an introductory email with a completed "Initial Consultation Form" to each Commission in early November 2010. This introductory email included an invitation to speak via phone to answer questions and to provide clarifications to each State Commission.

No follow-up action or grant application clarifications were requested by any of the state commissions that the National Program Coordinator spoke with. A few state service commissions responded with a thank you email to the National Program Coordinator. State service commissions that responded confirming receipt of the "Initial Consultation Form" provided to them by Share Our Strength include: CA, FL, NY, MN, MO, NE, NC, and TX.

No response was provided to Share Our Strength by the state service commissions in CO, CT, DC, GA, ME, MI, ME, LA, OR, NH, NJ, or WA.

### NEW PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR YEAR 2:

Share Our Strength is updating its performance measures in year 2. Share Our Strength will continue to

## Narratives

use performance measures under the Serve America Act Focus Area of Healthy Futures but will no longer include Volunteer Recruitment and Member development measures.

Share Our Strength's single performance measure, Increased and Improved Nutrition and Budgeting, has been adjusted to hold a numerical value rather than a percentage as its Intermediate Outcome target (from 70% of participants to 1,617 participants which was calculated as 70% of the target participant number of 2,310 participants).



## Performance Measures

### SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None  Geographic Focus - Rural  
 Geographic Focus - Urban  Encore Program

### Priority Areas

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education<br><i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/>                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures<br><i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship<br><i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families<br><i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity<br><i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other<br><i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/>                          |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 21

### Service Categories

Other Health/Nutrition Primary  Secondary

### Increased and Improved Nutrition and Budgeting

**Service Category:** Other Health/Nutrition

**Measure Category:** Needs and Service Activities

### Strategy to Achieve Results

**Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)**

Cooking Matters provides cooking-based nutrition education and budgeting classes to low-income families in 27 cities with significant numbers of families at risk of hunger and poor nutrition. This is a proven method of improving families' ability to select, purchase, and prepare health foods on a limited income.

21 Full-time AmeriCorps members will organize Operation Frontline courses in 17 communities.

Members will serve 9-12 months in each position, with a time commitment of approx.

40hrs/week(FT). Of this time, members will spend 30-50% of their time coordinating classes. Class coordination includes: recruiting, training, and supporting culinary, nutrition, and other volunteers; developing and managing relationships with community agencies that host classes; and overseeing the actual class sessions including but not limited to the provision of the necessary supplies and support of

**Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)**

volunteers and beneficiaries.

**Results**

**Result: Output**

Community members will attend Cooking Matters Courses.

Indicator: participants

Target: 2,310 community members will attend Cooking Matters courses coordinated by AmeriCorps members during the program year. 10 courses coordinated by each of the 21 members x 11 participants per course: 10 courses x 21MSY x 11 participants.

Target Value: 2310

Instruments: Participant information forms, which include attendance logs.

PM Statement: Community members will attend Cooking Matters courses. 2,310 community members will participate in/attend Cooking Matters courses coordinated by AmeriCorps members during the program year.

Prev. Yrs. Data

**Result: Intermediate Outcome**

Participants will demonstrate nutrition, cooking and food budgeting knowledge and skills by the completion of the course.

Indicator: Increase in knowledge or skills

Target: By the completion of the course, at least 70% of the target 2,310 (1,617 participants) Cooking Matters participants in courses coordinated by AmeriCorps members will report improved nutrition practices such as eating more fruits, vegetables and whole

Target Value: 1617

Instruments: A retrospective-pretest/post test participant survey.

PM Statement: Participants will demonstrate nutrition, cooking, and food budgeting knowledge and skills by the completion of the course. 1,617 (70%) of Cooking Matters participants will report improved nutrition practices such as eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Prev. Yrs. Data

## Subapplicants

<u>ID</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Amount Requested</u>	<u>Amount Approved</u>	<u># FTEs Requested</u>	<u># FTEs Approved</u>	<u>Status</u>
Totals:		\$0	\$0	0.00	0.00	

## Required Documents

**Document Name**

**Status**

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Federally Approved Indirect Cost Agreement

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable